The Cultural Bases of America . . . By Lewis Mumford

The Saturday Review of Literature

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The Saturday Review of Literature

The Cultural Bases of America

LEWIS MUMFORD

THE history of American culture has still to be written. Unfortunately, the one writer who was equipped to embrace it as a whole died, by a sad mischance, at the moment when she was marshalling her energies for the actual writing. Her name was Constance Mayfield Rourke; and as one looks back over her life, appraises the part of it that was fulfilled, grasps her intention, and beholds her masterly preparation, it becomes clear that hers was one of the great names of our generation.

Constance Rourke's death was like the loss of a great strategist to an army whose campaign has bogged down through the aggressive limitations of small-minded tacticians. As a research worker, there was nothing in the field of American cultural history that she could not do and had not done. She was equally at home in music, literature, painting, drama, and the crafts; and she would run down an obscure picture, ferret out a local tale, or rummage through heaps of faded letters with the relentless patience that marks the useful spade-worker. But she had what few ordinary field workers have: a sense of relative values; so that all her special items gained value by their relevance to the greater whole she carried in her mind.

The balance between detail and generalization is always difficult to hold. Looking back, one can see now that Constance Rourke's very diligence, her thoroughness, her gift for squeezing out the last drop of factual juice perhaps made her postpone too long the actual writing of the great history she had conceived. But apart from the financial handicaps that every unattached writer must face, she was slowed down by another difficulty: she often confronted virgin land, where she herself had to clear the trees before she could plant the corn, and plant the corn before she could bake the bread. At all events, she died before she had written more than a few sections of her three volume history.* It is these precious fragments that Mr. Van Wyck Brooks has put, with a sympathetic introduction, into the present volume.

This juncture of Van Wyck Brooks and Constance Rourke is a happy one. For Mr. Brooks was the first critic of importance to estimate Constance Rourke's talents at their true value; and though in certain aspects of American culture, as in the interpretation of the puritan and the pioneer, she challenged the author of "America's Coming of Age," she did this without losing respect for his great talents. It is incorrect, on the other hand, to suggest, as Mr. John Chamberlain did the other day, that Brooks's affirmative attitude toward American culture dates from the publication of Constance Rourke's "American Humor." Actually, the turning point in his development came through his intimate study of Emerson in 1925 and 1926—before she had published a book.

American culture, as Constance Rourke conceived it, had its roots in the folk and emanated from their fresh experience in a new land. Even when it made use of European techniques or materials, it transposed the European notes into another key and another measure. Indians, Negroes, Moravian peasants, Puritans, Shakers, farmers, merchants, miners, lumbermen, cowboys, all had made their contributions to our rich cultural compost: they had never been so materialistic, so preoccupied with the mere urgencies of physical survival, as a more utilitarian interpretation had supposed. What had seemed a lapse of culture in one generation often turned out to be only a lapse of memory in the generation that succeeded it.

—Painting by M. Lois Murphy, from the collection of the Whitney Museum of American Art.

Sometimes the upper layers of our culture had made use of folk interests, as Herman Melville and Walt Whitman had done: Constance Rourke traced these subtle relationships in her "American Humour." Sometimes, thanks to the anemic, class-bound character of our weaker artists, that healthy connection with vulgar experience was lost. But the roots remained important: our humor, our capacity for imaginative exaggeration, our tough self-confidence, our delight in clean technical virtuosity underlay works apparently as different as a painting by Audubon, a Shaker village, and the pepper-and-salt contrasts of "Moby Dick." In the present book, Constance Rourke finds the theory of functionalism in art expressed by Franklin, long before Horatio Greenough or Louis Sullivan. At every point, she added both depth and breadth to our past.

Reviewing Miss Rourke's literary life, one sees that all her earlier books were preparation for the final monument that was to cap them. Beginning with "Trumpets of Jubilee" and "Troupers of the Gold Coast," published in 1927 and 1928 respectively, the five books she published in her lifetime were all efforts to unearth the roots of American culture. Her Crockett and her Audubon biographies were fresh efforts to outline the American character at its point of origin, in all its originality. Her own roots reached far back into our pioneer past, through a great-grandfather, George Mayfield, who had been captured as a child by the Indians. She herself was a great collector of tall stories, this quiet, demure woman, with her lovely, clean-modelled face, her merry eyes, and her prematurely white hair. She had as fine an ear for gossip and out-of-the-way lore as Thomas Beer; and she had the sort of rich human understanding that made it easy for her to hold the role of the confidante, even with the young.

**THE ROOTS OF AMERICAN CULTURE. By Constance Rourke. Edited with a preface by Van Wyck Brooks. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1942. 305 pp. $3.*

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All these qualities made their way into her books.

The book that best sums up Constance Rourke's talents—her subtle insight and her quiet boldness—is her "American Humour." This remarkable study has all the elements of a classic, including the fact that its high reputation is out of all proportion to its still very limited circulation. The practical neglect of this book, published more than a decade ago, is one of the disgraces of our cultural life; for it is a book that every high school senior and every college student should be thoroughly acquainted with: it is almost as essential to our self-understanding and self-appraisal as Emerson's essays on "Self Reliance" and "The American Scholar" or Whitman's "Preface to Leaves of Grass" and his "Democratic Vistas." Yet a great many Americans, who would doubtless resent being called illiterate, have not read it.

If the publication of Constance Rourke's new book sends the reader back to her earlier volumes, as it should, that is not to belittle the contents of the final volume, but to draw attention to its excellence. Its two major essays, "The Roots of American Culture" and "The Rise of Theatricals," give the measure of her maturity. Some of her earlier writing is occasionally weakened by a Henry-Jamesian allusiveness and obliqueness of approach. But the deeper that Constance Rourke got into her great subject, the more direct did she become, and the more firm and sinewy her style. The introductory essay may well become a "prolegomenon to all future interpretations of American culture." It is the most discerning study of the American idea that has been published in our generation. In the second essay, on "The Rise of Theatricals," Constance Rourke was on ground she had made her own: here again her contribution is definitive. In the remaining essays, on early American music, on the culture and art of the Shakers, on Negro literature and Voltaire Combe the painter, one has glimpses, tantalizing, almost maddening glimpses, of the span and purview of her unwritten work.

No one but Constance Rourke herself could have breathed life into the vast accumulation of notes she had made for her great survey. But as one who has had the privilege of going through all her papers, I can vouch for their richness and inclusiveness; in every department of our culture, she had unexpected treasures to reveal, she found gold embedded in great nuggets next to quartz, and she found precious fragments of the dust in the remotest and muddiest streams. Had Constance Rourke lived she would have done more than sum up what was humanly important in the research and interpretation of the last thirty years: she would have added new territory to the provinces that had already been staked out; and she would have restored to her countryman that sense of a wider human goal, meaningful to mankind as a whole, which every American, from Franklin to Emerson, from Jefferson to Lincoln, from Cooper to Mark Twain, once possessed.

Constance Rourke's death followed an accidental fall on the ice; but it was actually caused by a thrombosis; and in that particular circumstance I am tempted, without medical authority, to read the same underlying causes that hastened Thomas Beer's end. For this brave woman, who had so deeply immersed herself in American culture and who so well incarnated its best traits, was no cultural or political isolationist. She was one of that pitifully small group of awakened people who took the measure of the fascist menace long before Soviet Russia was invaded or Pearl Harbor bombed. Never for a moment had she participated in that almost universal flight from reality which characterized American leadership—that of the so-called interventionists almost as much as the isolationists. Constance Rourke battled against the complacency, the human callousness, the absence of even ar animal sense of danger, which charac terized our fellow-countrymen, in particular those of her native Middle West. In that effort, she exhausted her own vitality and laid herself open to the final blow. She died in March, 1941.

Constance Rourke's love for the indigenous and the idiomatic in American culture was not an effort to escape the realities of our world civilization, not a mechanism for building a fantastic ideological wall around the United States or the Western Hemisphere. She left such infantile illusions to the Lindberghs, the Stuart Chases, the Frank Lloyd Wrights. Just the contrary, her sense of our culture, like the Americanism of Emerson and Whitman, came out of a desire to make more rich and salty America's contribution to the world at large. I can vouch personally for both her courage and her clear-sightedness. When I published "Men Must Act" in 1938, she was almost alone among our American intellectuals in coming to the support of its thesis and accepting the challenge to action.

It is not too late to learn the lesson that Constance Rourke's life and work taught; it is not too late, and it is imperative. For it is only by drawing on the roots of American culture that we shall gather the toughness and courage and self-confidence that will enable us to live through the menacing days that lie ahead.

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THE SATURDAY REVIEW OF LITERATURE, published weekly by the Saturday Review Company, Inc., 25 West 45th Street, New York, N. Y. Harrison Smith, President and Treasurer; Anthony Passaretti, Vice President; Amy Loveman, Secretary; Albert R. Erskine, Jr., Advertising Manager. Subscription, $4 a year; $5 in Canada and other countries. At least 3 weeks' notice required for changes of address; both old and new addresses must be given. Printed in U. S. A. Vol. XXV, No. 33, August 15, 1942. Entered as second class matter at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879. THE SATURDAY REVIEW is indexed in the "Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature."

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Jonathan Bradford, Abolitionist

THE DRUMS OF MORNING. By Philip Van Doren Stern. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1942. 616 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by SIDNEY L. MCGEE

OUR materialistic age has taught us to believe that wars are fought for economic reasons rather than for idealistic principles. Not since we closed our last school textbooks of history have we thought of the Civil War as one fought primarily for the freedom of the slaves. Rather have we looked upon it as a crisis in the building of empire.

Yet there were men who looked upon it as a struggle for human liberty, zealots who strove only to free the slaves, whether by persuasion or by violence, and who were shocked as the war progressed to find that economic and political questions were in the ascendancy. These were the Abolitionists.

It is of these zealots that Philip Van Doren Stern writes in his new novel, "The Drums of Morning." Mr. Stern won his spurs as an authority on the sidelights of the Civil War three years ago with his semi-fictionalized biography of "The Man Who Killed Lincoln." Eyebrows were raised then that Lincoln's assassin should be made the not unsympathetic protagonist of a novel. More eyebrows will be raised now that the law-breaking, trouble-making Abolitionists should be made the heroes of another novel.

This work is a *tour de force* of historical reconstruction. Reconstruction, however, not of facts viewed impartially in the light of history, but of the state of mind of this fanatical minority of crusaders who were nourished by as heavy a diet of what we now call propaganda as the world has ever been asked to digest. Mr. Stern is so successful in recapturing the mood of the time that one almost suspects him of believing "Uncle Tom's Cabin" is a true story. Certainly he is painstaking in his care to cull and use from his voluminous reading of anti-slavery literature all the clichés and half-truths he could find about the South.

Philip Van Doren Stern

In order to leave no Abolitionist stone unturned, Mr. Stern carries his protagonist, Jonathan Bradford, through enough adventures to satisfy even the devotees of the Three Musketeers. Jonathan was a lad of nine in 1837 when his father was killed in the Abolitionist riot in Alton, Ill. Thereafter Fate, in the person of Mr. Stern, placed him upon the scene of all the major anti-slavery battles, and made him the friend of the outstanding Abolitionist leaders. His adventures include his seduction by a Southern belle, a duel, being branded in the hand with the letters SS for slave-stealing, participation in the Boston riots over the deportation of the escaped slave, Anthony Burns, operation of a station on the Underground Railroad, and, during the war, imprisonment in the infamous Andersonville prison.

The book is dedicated "To all those who have fought for freedom anywhere; to all those who are now oppressed and who wait in silence for the day of liberation to come." If it were not for the seriousness of this dedication and the honesty with which Mr. Stern has attempted to portray the Abolitionist movement, the reviewer would be inclined to place this book in the category of satire: a "perfect" Abolitionist novel to end all Abolitionist novels.

It is more than that, however. It is a painstaking and thorough reconstruction of a segment of our national past.

A Generation in Maine

SIMON HASTINGS. By F. M. Tibbott. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company. 1942. 351 *pp.* $2.50

Reviewed by CHARLES DAVID ABBOTT

THIS unpretentious novel presents the life of a small community in northern Maine during and for twenty-five years after the Civil War. It pictures the social conditions of the region and period not only with fidelity but also with the enthusiastic enjoyment of domestic detail that gave such zest to Arnold Bennett's novels. What Bennett did for a draper's shop in the Five Towns, Mr. Tibbott can do for his farms and lumber camps. He invests them with the kind of compelling interest that makes every haying, every ice-cutting, every felling of timber an event of momentous importance. They are less drab to begin with, the farms and the lumber camps, than Mr. Baines's shop, but their warm colors are intensified by Mr. Tibbott's affectionate handling. He achieves, as Bennett did, the romance of the commonplace.

There, however, the likeness ends. Bennett could give vitality, solidity, and roundness to the most seemingly unexciting characters. Mr. Tibbott has not learned that art. Even Simon Hastings, the hero, for all his sterling qualities and his undeniable charm, is never quite so appealing and so unforgettable as the potatoes stored in the cellar or the apples waiting in the orchard for the cider-press. Simon's half-brothers, the villains of the piece though one of them undergoes a surprising reformation, are so flatly bad that it is difficult to believe in their actions at all. There is a kind of emotional confusion throughout which comes, I think, from the forcing of an involved and melodramatic plot upon a beautifully conceived and beautifully executed setting and upon a *dramatis personae* basically incapable of sustaining it. The characters never seem to act from any inner compulsion; they work and play, love and hate, are good and evil only because the plot demands it of them. And this is a great pity, because it spoils what might have been a first-rate novel. Simon, his half-brothers, and all the rest of the picturesque community ought to have enough in themselves, if they followed their natural instincts, to make a good story. As it is, they are snowed under by the weight of arson, murder, attempted murder, and blackmail that combine to make up the topheavy plot. Mr. Tibbott could learn something from a Maine novelist of another generation, Sara Orne Jewett. If he can reproduce the quiet inevitability of her tales and keep his delight in the Maine country, he will be worth watching.

Dr. Rufus M. Jones, founder of the American Friends Service Committee, has just been awarded the Theodore Roosevelt Medal, given for distinguished service in fields associated with the career of President Theodore Roosevelt.

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History via an Inferno

RETREAT TO VICTORY. By Allan A. Michie. New York: The Alliance Press. 1942. 492 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by PIERRE VAN PAASSEN

IT is a refreshing experience to watch a correspondent at work who does not seek to convey the impression that he himself is the central figure in the momentous events he witnessed and is describing.

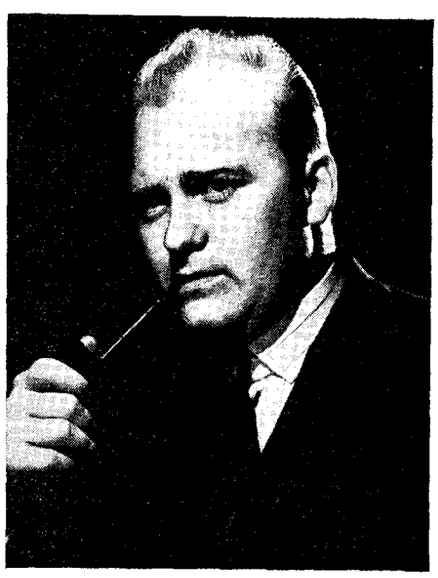
Mr. Michie has had an amazing career, and he has come through the most bitterly contested campaigns of the Second World War with his faith in our ultimate triumph intact and confirmed. He records his findings with exactitude and in an almost breathless and crisp style which harmonizes perfectly with the speed of his travels and his almost lightninglike shifts from one battlefield to the other.

It is right, however, to say that, interesting as are the conclusions at which he arrives, his book makes no literary pretensions and has none. Yet it does provide some significant and even shocking revelations, as, for instance, when it tells of America's failure to supply the Dutch with aerial and other equipment for the defense of Indonesia, although the orders for bombers and fighters had been placed in this country long before Japan launched her attack. We learn that it took the personal appeal of Princess Juliana and Prince Bernard to President Roosevelt to obtain the release of at least a few thousand antiquated Lee Enfield rifles for the defense of Java. Instances of wilful dilly-dallying and shortsightedness of this sort—the delay in shipping war material to Russia falls in the same category, says Mr. Michie—make one wonder sometimes if all the pother about subversive crackpots does not merely succeed in distracting our attention from the higher-up defeatists who really jeopardize our victory.

Mr. Michie's book is plain, entirely without ornament, and with little humor; it gives us the facts and covers an impressive lot of ground. We go with him from the ghastly business of Dunkirk to the Near East, through the Italian debacles of Lybia and Ethiopia, then to Syria, where it was Frenchmen against Frenchmen. We are given close-ups of General de Gaulle in London and of Generals Wavell and Auchinleck in Cairo. We are initiated into that world of intriguants and oily tricksters where Farouk, Abdullah, Hamin Husseini, and Gailiani pirouette before the footlights. We dip into Macchiavellian Turkish politics and see something of the much cruder struggle of interests in Afghanistan. Then we witness the harrowing defeats of Hongkong, Malaya, and Burma; catch a glimpse of Nehru, Gandhi, and of the Russian campaign, and finally land on the home front, the ensemble forming a *tour d'horizon* as fascinating as a newsreel.

One is struck above all in this account by the sound common sense of most of Mr. Michie's judgments and the rapidity with which he arrived at them. He has proved himself that good understander of the Flemish proverb who needs but half a word to size up a situation.

Where the book is extremely valuable is in its account of the rehabilitation of the British soldier. The Englishman in the field appears as a most valiant and gallant warrior who has fought against impossible odds in half a dozen campaigns and yet has kept his dauntless spirit and his precious good humor. We greatly need such an appraisal of our British allies in America where the Fifth Column, as solidly entrenched in certain editorial offices as it was in France before Petain's capitulation, leaves no stone unturned to belittle, discredit, and malign the British soldier, who, with his Russian comrade-in-arms, has nevertheless borne the brunt of the terrible onslaught of the Axis. Mr. Michie has rendered a patriotic service in setting us aright on that subject.



Allan Michie

Although Michie courageously arrives at an independent judgment on Indian affairs in condemning British imperialism for the deadlock in that country which may yet prove a serious obstacle in winning this war for the four freedoms "everywhere in the world," he apparently allowed the propagandists of the Colonial Office to pull the wool over his eyes in the Near and Middle East, when they made him believe that there is a Pan-Arabic movement which Britain must constantly take into account and appease.

This makes him utter the enormity that a Jewish army based on Palestine for the defense of Suez is "a luxury" which the British cannot afford at the present time and that it is not a question of manpower in that part of the world. If it is not a question of manpower why has America been urged to send reinforcements in men to Lybia? And why should a hundred and fifty thousand American soldiers go half way around the world through submarine-infested oceans when a potential defense force is available in Palestine, that is to say: on the ground and eager for combat?

It seems to me, too, that Mr. Michie's optimism on the effect of bombing of Germany may create some unwarranted over-confidence. Since a second front appears to him extremely difficult of realization, he expresses the opinion that bombing the Reich will bring Germany to her knees. Bombing will help, no doubt. But it will have to be done quickly. For if the German advance of the last two months into Russia is maintained at a similar rate for another sixty days the entire Caucasus will be in Hitler's hands before the snow flies, and the Fuehrer will then have attained his two chief objectives: the elimination of Britain from European affairs and the possession of Russia's richest agricultural and industrial region—which are out of reach of bombers based on Britain.

Another small bone I should like to pick with Mr. Michie concerns his statement that Petain has kept the French fleet out of the hands of the Nazis, and that the people of the occupied countries are itching to rise against Hitler. The truth is that the French fleet was hitherto kept out of Hitler's hands not by Petain but by the naval crews who are for the most part boys and men from the ports of Toulon, Marseilles, Brest, etc., that is to say anti-fascists, socialists, and patriots: That is why Darlan is training new crews. As for the unrest, in the occupied countries, in France for instance, only the proletariat is restless. According to the testimony of an eminent Frenchman who just came out of France, many members of the business and financial world and of the military high command are, almost without an exception, collaborating zealously with Hitler.

These are minor matters, however, in Mr. Michie's book, and do not detract from its value as a lucid, most readable, and up-to-date account of the war and as a potent tonic for depressed souls.

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The Nature of the Japanese Enemy

FIRE IN THE PACIFIC. By Simon Harcourt-Smith. Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. 1942. 342 *pp.* $2.

Reviewed by HALLETT ABEND

IT is with an eager gusto, blighting wit, and searing satire that Mr. Harcourt-Smith proceeds to summarize the events in the Far East since 1930, against a sketchy but highly effective background of Japanese history and Japanese character. The author was serving in the British Legation in Peiping when the Japanese began their Manchurian grab in 1931, was later stationed in Shanghai, and still later was in the Far Eastern Department of the Foreign Office in London.

This book is no apology for the decade of appeasement preceding the attack upon Pearl Harbor, but a devastating appraisal of the men and policies leading up to the white man's defeat and humiliation when he was swept out of the Far East, with appalling losses, in a little more than three months. With Mr. Harcourt-Smith this is evidently not a case of great clarity of hindsight; he doubtless kept many of his diplomatic colleagues in combative opposition during the years when inept statesmanship in London (and in Washington) was giving Japan a free hand to prepare for her desperate gamble of seeking to win domination of East Asia and Indonesia by force.

The author is equally frank about the blunders of British administration in Malaya, Burma, and India, and shows a fine scorn for the worst phases of imperialism, exploitation, and the social stupidities of the colonial system as practised in the Orient.

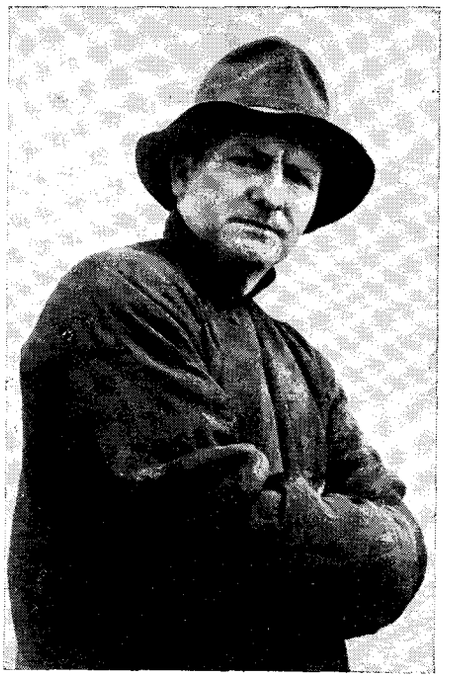
It is a rather notable achievement to have "Fire in the Pacific" succeed in being a very sound book in general argument and conclusions, for it is filled with absurd errors of fact, geography, and history. For instance, it places Hankow 1,700 miles from the sea; it places the seaport of Hulatao east instead of northwest of Dairen; and on page 210 amazingly declares that Midway Island was "soon taken by the enemy."

Admitting that much of his book is "a chronicle of muddle-headed weakness," Mr. Harcourt-Smith declares that the recounting of a decade of blunders would be useless except that "from self criticism . . . a vigorous nation can draw fresh and terrible strength; but for a dying one it is a morbid, unpardonable luxury."

The volume abounds in penetrating passages like this:—"It was disconcerting to watch the Japanese civilian mind shutting with a snap against the world. But there was also something irresistibly ludicrous in the process; a fanatic gleam behind the horn-rimmed spectacles that betrayed an unhappiness, an uncertainty of spirit." And then this:—"We hear much of Dachau, the wholesale massacre of Poles. . . . We should not forget, however, that in the German psychology sadism occupies a place which is definitely paranoic. . . . But your Japanese, even when he drives out of Tokyo in a motor coach to gush over waterfalls, is living on the verge of violence and pain. Suddenly the eye will become suffused with blood, the nervous voice will change from a giggle to a shriek, and an explosion of frenzy will carry away all powers of the mind save a homicidal cunning."

On the last page of his book the author cautions against that mistake, all too common in the United States as well as in England, of believing that only the Japanese militarist is our enemy. He warns that we must bring home to the poorest peasant and the humblest mill worker in Osaka the dire consequences of war if we are to have an enduring peace in the Pacific.

"Let us remember," he cautions, "that here is no decent, reasonable populace, exploited by a pack of militaristic gangsters, but seventy-five million madmen, all prepared to commit any crime at the behest of the State."



Jan Henrik Marsman

I ESCAPED FROM HONGKONG. By Jan Henrik Marsman. New York: Reynal & Hitchcock. 1942. 249 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by MARK GAYN

THE latest eyewitness report on Japan's atrocities now comes from a Dutch-born American, Jan Henrik Marsman, known throughout the Far East for his variegated business ventures. Due to leave Hongkong on a Clipper on the morning of Dec. 8, Marsman was caught by the Japanese attack. He witnessed the siege and the initial weeks of the occupation—until Chinese friends helped him to escape into Free China.

Marsman's story (most of which has already appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post*) does not make pleasant reading. It is a tale of cold-blooded murder of Chinese, Hindus, and Britons by the Japanese soldiery. It is a story of rape, torture, cruelty, and looting, on a scale not seen since the ravaging of Nanking in 1937. Prisoners of war were bound and bayoneted before Marsman's eyes. Passersby became "sparring partners" for Japanese soldiers practising jiu-jitsu—until they collapsed in exhaustion, and were murdered. A doctor, trussed up like a pig, was made to witness the assault on his nurses, and then killed. A woman with a young child was attacked by a Japanese guard in the concentration camp in an old hotel. Another escaped rape only because her mother-in-law and Marsman himself entered the room, and calmly seated themselves by the bed. Abashed, the soldier finally gave up the struggle and retired. Marsman loads all these tales with dynamite by his calm, dispassionate treatment. He draws no moral; he merely reports.

But the book is more than a book-length atrocity tale. It is a portrait of the Japanese army in action: a wonderfully efficient war machine, systematic in its espionage, preparation for the attack, tactics, and even its savagery. These sections alone should be made prescribed reading for our army officers, who sooner or later will have to tackle the Japanese Army.

The only weak part of the book is the last two chapters, dealing with China at war. This section has a very remote relation to the rest of the book; in it, moreover, Marsman ceases to be a reporter and becomes a prophet. In this role, he does not star. But even with this weak, anticlimactic conclusion, Marsman's is a terrifying and impressive story.

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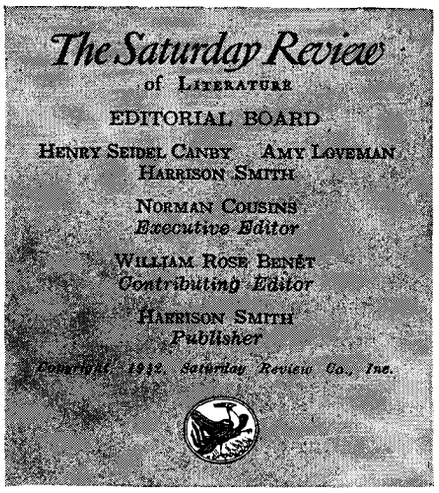

CHARTER DAY

AUGUST 14 marks the first anniversary of what is so far the most important document of the war—the Atlantic Charter. The war has not gone too well since the Charter was signed and consequently little progress can be recorded in the actual fulfillment of its long-range objectives. And yet, remote as full application and operation may seem at this moment, the Charter's essential validity and necessity seem even greater than they did a year ago. In particular need of restatement and emphasis are the clauses pertaining to post-war organization and coöperation.

Precisely what the wave of the future will be we do not know. There is no more evidence for saying it will be totalitarian than that it will be democratic. But whatever the form it will take, certain inevitables have already been washed up on the shore: the small sovereign state as Europe has known it can be no more—indeed, Europe as we have known it can be no more; whatever emphasis will be given to the division of the world group will be upon continental or hemispherical units rather than upon national units; finally, no longer is there room in the world for two or more ideologies of like strength, for modern ideologies carry their own economic patterns; and if the world is in need of anything, it is an integrated economy.

Democracy, if it is to exist at all, must exist on a large scale. At one time in the history of the world, it could exist only on the smallest of scales. But today democracy could exist on a small scale only if the alternatives to democracy permitted it to do so; and the alternatives of democracy today do not permit it to do so. Democracy must therefore be dominant over the alternatives or it must die. While democracy cannot cram its dogma down the throats of peoples whose political digestive systems are not ready for it, it must be strong enough to insure, for its own good and safety, that the leadership of the world association remains in its own hands.

A false defeatist argument about the future of democracy could easily be built up at this point by quoting from Aristotle and from as comparatively recent a political philosopher as Rousseau, to prove that democracy cannot exist on a large scale. But it must be remembered that the arguments of Aristotle and Rousseau, both of whom viewed the model state as a small democracy, must be considered against the background of the world in which they both lived. And it is perhaps a revealing commentary on the newness of the geographical revolution to note that Aristotle and Rousseau, though two thousand years apart, belonged to the same world in the sense of access and proximity.

But it is a new and different world in which we live, and old arguments concerning the physical limitations of a state are valid only where the old conditions prevail. Moreover, it is false to offer Aristotle's arguments as evidence for physical restrictions on democracy, for even according to his own definition, democracy should be possible today not only on a large scale but on a world scale. Aristotle believed that the size of a state should be determined by the range of man's voice; thus the miracle of radio has transformed the world into a potential state, placing no limitations on size save that imposed by the globe itself.

Unwieldiness as a factor in the operations of a state is of course relative to the instruments of control. Harmony is dependent upon relationships; and relationships among states, as among citizens, are determined both by respect for law, by penalties for violations of law, by mutuality, and by practicality. And no less an authority on union and confederation than *The Federalist* (No. 51) tells us that "the larger the society, provided it be within a practical sphere, the more duly capable it will be of self-government."

Purely as a practical matter and without any reference to moral considerations—since that is the ground on which the seclusionists and twentieth-century troglodytes make their stand, and since they should be taken on their own ground if possible—America may have no choice other than to jump with both feet into the organization of a world association. We have established an economic and industrial tempo in the drive for military strength which, whether we like it or not, cannot be halted or even slowed up substantially without bringing down the house itself. Economic America has never been very good at reducing or paring down. Once a wheel starts going it must be kept going, otherwise it will slow up or halt other wheels along with it. Expansion, in itself synonymous with America, is quickly absorbed into the bloodstream of the national economy, and it is as difficult to revert to the former condition as it would be to change blood back into water.

Assuming that the crisis in which democracy now finds itself ends, and that it will end in its favor—which is perhaps assuming a lot but which nevertheless is the general objective—what will happen not only to the nation's industrial machinery, which will have been expanded by then to at least several times its normal size, but to the human material within it?

Practically speaking, then, the world association—if we play the part in it that is properly and by duty ours—offers an opportunity to keep the bloodstream of the national economy in full and free flow and circulation. Only this time, the industrial might and genius of America can be used toward rebuilding and improving the world, instead of contributing to its destruction, which by no choice of its own it has been forced to do. There will be the debris of a continent, and possibly of the world, to clear away; there will be homes and factories to build; there will be dams and bridges and highways to build. There will be a better world to make. N. C.

The Doom

By Bette Richart

BROUGHT to earth by a rider in the night
She lies on the cold ground, alone and frantic,
Watching the clouds above her and the wind
Dance a wild antic.

The night is terrible to her as she turns
From side to side. Never again shall sleep
Hold her, profoundly tender, but the wild
Ravager of her kind shall make her weep.

And burn against the night, a phosphorescence
Evil and other-worldly, while the hoof
Of her lover's horse—though now so far away—
Is thundering in her ear like a reproof.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Stuffing the Ballot Box

SIR:—The *SRL* is particularly vital to those of us who are in the armed services and who without it almost certainly would be denied access to what is going on in the world of words. How important that sphere is to us here is measured, I believe, by the fact that it is largely upon what type of word order prevails that the settlement of this war may depend.

I find the reviews of current books urgent and stimulating in the extreme. The high calibre of the contributors is indicated by the fact, that, to me, and others probably feel the same reaction, their commentaries on a book are often of more interest and more revelatory concerning the subject discussed than the gist of the book itself. Even when one cannot agree with the conclusions they draw one is stimulated by the thought they have provoked. Occasionally, too, they are not afraid to throw their punches and that is in refreshing contrast to the all too prevalent mode today of clamorous praise of anything that bids fair to be a best seller and which disdains to mention almost any publication in words other than superlatives. I fear Hollywoodian extravagance with the language has seeped into criticism of that sort and as under that type of poppycock one has nothing by which to gauge the real merit of any work, it is fortunate that saner minds prevail in the *SRL* corner at least. I hate to merely beef, but it seems to me, that considering the gravity of the world situation and the supposed advantages we possess over all comers that an inordinate amount of tripe is inundating those who are endeavoring to keep their heads above the swirling waters of a flood of words. Any factor that attempts to separate the grains of worth from the mass of chaff in this day deserves our gratitude and the *S.R.L.* is qualified to draw it.

If, after this bitter struggle is over, we are not to botch the peace again, ideas that are clear and unafraid must gain dominance over old passions and ancient prejudices; it is in promulgating the best of current thought and hopes in combination with the classic ideals of timeless pertinency that the proper field of a magazine such as the *SRL* lies in the war. So far, I feel, you have been making splendid progress along these vital lines. Please accept my congratulations and may your efforts and success not flag.

PVT. SAMUEL A. YORKS.
T-424, Headquarters Co.,
Q.M.R.T.C., Camp Lee, Va.

SIR:—*The Saturday Review,* always good, is getting better! Nothing you have ever printed has exceeded in timeliness and beauty the recent article by Mr. Archibald MacLeish; yet I want to question the correctness of his use of the word, *revolution.*

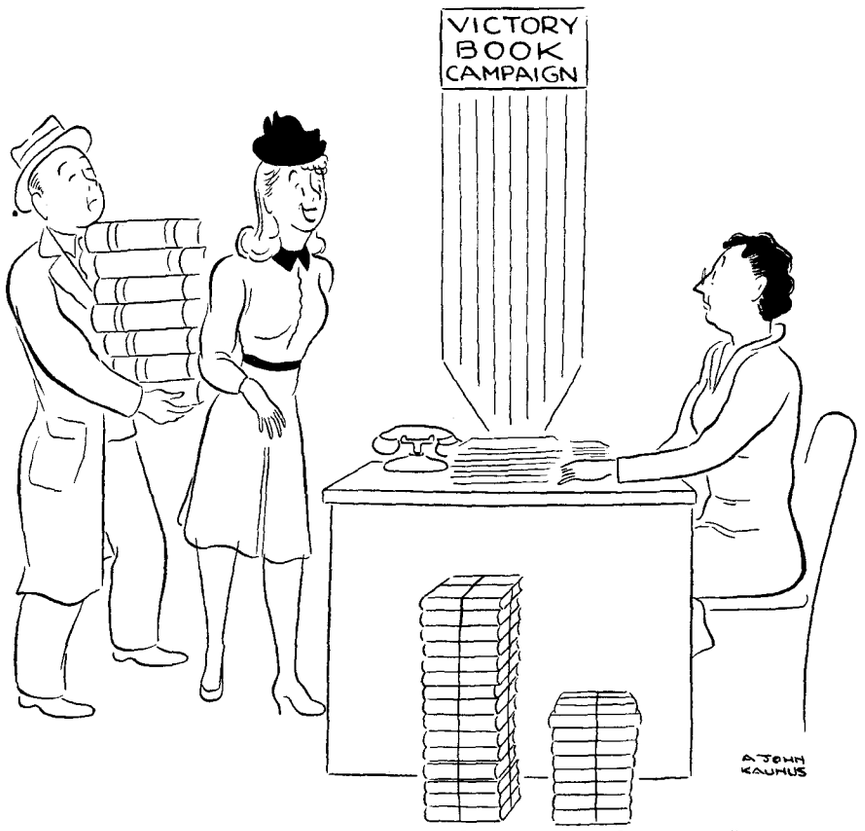
My interest is not in precision but in convincing, anti-Nazi publicity. To many of us, a revolution is a fundamental change. The word makes us think of new and clean beginnings, or at least, after the violence has subsided, an opportunity for beginnings which may turn out to be new and clean.

If this is not an utter misconception, then the Nazi violence is no revolution. It is violence to prevent new and clean beginnings, to prevent a fundamental change. Its barbarities are the ruthlessness of capitalism intensified, become maniacal. No basic change is involved.

Our way of life in recent years has always contained something of this attack upon man and his right to think. Frequently it has come to grips with our democratic faith in civil liberties. The fight is not new. It has merely reached a more acute stage and we are in greater danger of permanent defeat.

I think this point is important and I should like to know what Mr. MacLeish thinks about it.

FANNIE COOK.
7068 Maryland Drive,
St. Louis, Missouri.



"My husband never reads his lawbooks anyway, and so. . . . "

SIR:—The *bestest* editorial I've read yet—"Remember Lidice." Would that it could be read by every American. The young instructor who said, "I'd enlist if I knew what we were fighting for," will get a postcard from me now referring him to "Remember Lidice."

MRS. W. H. BONNER.

"At the Gate"

SIR:—Juliette Laine of Los Angeles asks for information concerning my little story "At the Gate," which appeared in the *Century Magazine* many, many years ago.

Its latest appearance was in "Valiant Dogs," a collection of dog stories compiled by Frances E. Clarke and published by Macmillan in 1936.

If that volume is not available I can send Miss Laine a copy of the story if she writes me in your care for forwarding.

MYLA JO CLOSSER.
Jackson Heights, N. Y.

Guess Again, E. T. L.

SIR:—Re inquiry by Juliette Laine, the story she describes sounds to me like R. Kipling—at any rate Kipling wrote a fine *poem* on that very theme. It is called "Dinah in Heaven," in his volume "Limits and Renewals." It contains one specially superb stanza which will delight your correspondent.

☞Incidentally, why not ask Harry Hansen to discuss more fully his curious idea that T. S. Eliot's recent brilliantly sagacious piece about Kipling was "merely the backtracking of a middle-aged pedant."

E. TENEBRIS LUX, '02.

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Latin Americana

FIESTA IN NOVEMBER: Stories from Latin America. Selected and Edited by Angel Flores and Dudley Poore. Introduction by Katherine Anne Porter. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1942. 608 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by N. L. ROTHMAN

THERE are eighteen novelettes and short stories included here, by writers from eleven Latin-American countries, from Mexico to Chile. If these are a representative sampling of Latin-American writing, and Miss Katherine Anne Porter indicates that they are, then they present us not only with a wholly unfamiliar group of creative writers, but also, perhaps more important, with our first reliable cross-section of a people whom we must know and understand and apparently do not. Let us say at once, before passing to other considerations, that the writing is good, that these are, in varying degrees, talented artists. Eduardo Mallea of Argentina, author of the novelette, "Fiesta in November," seems the most literary of the group, possessed of the most power and technical mastery. We shall return to him. Guillermo Meneses of Venezuela and Jorge Amado of Brazil, in two sketches of similar scope, give easy and poetic expression to the South American's feeling about the sea, fatalistic, fearful, and, in a minor key, erotic. Romero of Mexico writes most charmingly of a picaresque folk-hero, while Malta of Ecuador chooses a folk-legend for purposes more stirring, more somber, nothing less than the struggle for indigenous culture and self-determination, against the influences of the foreigner.

Each of these tales has its unique focus and method; yet from the whole collection there rise certain general effects that prove to be its greatest value. What do we perceive? First, the South American is highly emotional, closer to his emotions than anything we can find in our own literature. He feels, suffers, delights, with his whole body and being. But he is not sentimental, he does not appreciate the kind of abstraction that looms so large in our writing. He will fight for his home but he does not moon about the Little Gray Shack by the Sea. He loves his women, but he does not worship Womanhood. Perhaps you will be surprised at the role of women in these stories. With but one exception (in "Fiesta in November" again) women are the willing instruments of man's needs—his need for warmth and love, mother and mistress. They do not play, or seem even to be aware of, any other function in life. Nor does it appear that they are the less significant for that.

If such abstractions are lacking, others exist, created by the vicissitudes of the continent. Let us remember that we are speaking not of the Hollywood version of the South American, that gay gaucho who owns strings of horses and ranches, sips his champagne down Argentinean way (café) with his beautiful and blonde señorita. These are the toilers, millions of them; they are Indians, Negroes, Creoles, and all the nameless varieties of blood mixture, living on the sea and the lumber and the cattle, and against the elements. The tone of their lives is primitive, and the realities that live personified in their minds are indeed the sea, storm, snow, wind, cold, death. Some of the best short sketches in the book are pure demonstrations of this personification.

—From "Salud: A South American Journal," by Margaret Culkin Banning.

Finally we return to Mallea's "Fiesta in November," for its superb craftsmanship and for its expression of something strangely absent everywhere else in the collection. Mallea is keenly aware of the encroaching danger of fascism, particularly of its sources inside the rotting bosom of Argentinan caste and gentility. This must be a dangerous position for him to take today, and we are impressed with the vigor and clarity of his expression of it, as well as the artistry he employs to give it life. Against a bitterly detailed portrait of splendor and small talk and moral corruption in a fashionable salon, he superimposes a swift running account of a typical fascist incident: the knock on the door in the night, the dragging out of the victim, the brutality, the slaying. Each highlights the other, as the two scenes intertwine. (Perhaps you will remember Faulkner's use of the device in "The Wild Palms.") Mallea's social conscience is fearful and tense. Perhaps the silence about such matters in the other work here collected will help to explain his fear.

Miss Porter's introduction is of great interest, perhaps because she has herself considerable subtlety and imagination. Although her evaluation of the novelette "Brother Ass" seems to us somewhat unjustified, the whole of her remarks is nonetheless altogether stimulating, and should be read with care.

Your Literary I. Q.

By Howard Collins

OCCUPANTS OF HELL

Mr. Kenneth D. Carroll, of Southern Illinois Normal University, is the author of this week's quiz. Since the world is so beset with hate and war, he says, some seem to think it is a hell. If so, they should easily recognize the occupants listed below, for they are very prominent citizens there. Identifying 5 is par, 6 is good, 7 or better is excellent. Answers on page 20.

1. I was loved by Margaret of Austria. When I got to hell, being devoted to her as I was, I sent her a report of my ideas and thoughts on hell.
2. In my lifetime I was a poet of note, but now I am a guide to a special visitor.
3. 'Though I received warnings many times I scoffed at ideas of the supernatural and continued to live in defiance of moral laws. I even set forth the values of living hypocritically.
4. I am the one who craved excitement and agonizing bliss so strongly that I agreed to depart for hell upon summons, if only first I could attain my heart's desires.
5. We insist we got here by mistake—a taxi driver took us literally.
6. As soon as I arrived, I set out to find Socrates in order to learn how he keeps that naive nature of his.
7. I am the master of that philosophic family of virtuous heathen who are given the better parts of hell.
8. I was the orator of my day. A fighting New Hampshire man by birth, I dared the devil himself and upon my wish thirteen of the most damnable souls in American history were called into my presence.
9. I was taken by the hand while yet on earth, surrounded by flames, and carried away by the demons of hell.
10. We sat in hell until we saw our father doing so well with men; then we set out to make the entrance to hell more accessible.

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Shearing . . .

THE SPECTRAL BRIDE. By Joseph Shearing. New York: Smith & Durrell, Inc. 1942. 314 *pp.* $2.

Reviewed by LEO LERMAN

JOSEPH SHEARING is unique. In "The Golden Violet," "Blanche Fury," "The Crime of Laura Sarelle," and "Aunt Beardie," he has repeatedly proved himself the foremost revivifier of antiquated and particularly gruesome crimes. Although the Victorian is his special province, he is no genteel dabbler in the coagulated gore of yesteryear. Beneath the pallid Victorian simper, he is quick to discover the sneering lips twisted ruthlessly in anger. The violet-scented glove does not conceal the blood-encrusted fingers from him. He is a past master of the carefully cadenced phrase and the triplicate sentence termination so dear to our forefathers. But the inflection of his polished prose is indubitably satiric. And the exhaustive period detail with which he fills his expert novels inevitably links past with present. There is nothing casual in a Shearing. Each anti-macassar has its preordained place in the ultimate tragedy. Each aspidistra contributes to the general horror. Even the family whatnot adds up to holocaust. The dainty pink bonnet "with long satin strings" which pretty Adelaide Fenton offers for her mother's admiration in the very opening sentence of "The Spectral Bride" is no exception to the rule.

This time Shearing has not only introduced a pink bonnet destined to invoke the diabolical and the occult, but he has transformed William Roughead's fascinating essay, "The Ambiguities of Miss Smith," into a real thriller. He has peopled the provincial English countryside of the 1870's with flesh and blood demons. His hero, James Daintry, the young Earl of Seagrove, is a forlorn lordling obsessed with an ancestor's bloody crime. His heroine, Adelaide Fenton, has delusions of grandeur and pretensions to gentility, but beneath her lilac-sprigged dimity beats a hard and festering heart and her modestly downcast eyes veil a scheming brain. All the trappings are here—the guttering candles dropping great blobs of wax upon the polished mahogany board; the surreptitious step upon the creaking midnight stair; a haunted "Folly"; mediums; a magnificent séance in fog-shrouded London; a harrowing graveyard replete with charnel-house gloom and legendary visitants. There is even a fetch! And this fetch, we may add with Old Lord Seagrove, is "a fetch indeed!"

In no one of his previous books has Shearing displayed his particular gift for mingling the real and the unreal, the psychological and the pure fantastic to better effect, and never before has he contrived such breath-taking suspense. Not only Shearingians, and there is an extensive cult of these, but everyone addicted to tales of murder and horror will welcome his latest thriller.

Wilgus . . .

TAD POTTER. By Asa Wilgus. New York: Duell, Sloan & Pearce. 1942. 269 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by PHIL STONG

TAD POTTER was a large young man who lived on one of those New England farms where the principal crops are boulders and abandoned cellars; Tad liked it there, however, the hunting, the maple sugaring, blueberry picking, the whole life. His Ma, who was bigger than most men, liked it, too; the two of them were built for it. Nearly all of the other women in the story wanted to move to town and a fair share of them wanted to move Tad to town with them.

Asa Wilgus

The school teacher who "eddicates" Tad is finally uprooted by his wife in spite of his Rousseauvian philosophies. Inez, Tad's adolescent love, puts powerful pressure on the boy to come to New York as a career man or even as a gigolo for her, but when Ma Potter dies Tad sees his way clearly—to keep her farm as she would want it kept—so he marries a nut brown maiden and starts a family to replace Ma's.

The trick of feigned naivete is carried off reasonably well, but when it goes rhapsodic it occasionally goes funny; a difficulty which Wordsworth also encountered frequently.

Holt . . .

AUNT JESSIE. By Isabella Holt. New York: Bobbs-Merrill. 1942. 272 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by ROSEMARY C. BENÉT

THE childhood part is often the most vivid and alive of any autobiography, however distinguished the later life may be. That same vivid "remembering" quality comes to "Aunt Jessie," and makes fresh and alive in a like way. This novel is the story of three children who lived in Chicago around 1912. The Kendall residence—(it was a residence)—was a marble-fronted house on Erie Street. The parents were wealthy dilettantes, rather on the social side, and they had pseudo-intellectual leanings. Father wanted to paint and mother longed to have a salon.

When the Kendall marriage went on the rocks, the children, Alastair, Theodosia, and Benjamin felt grief and insecurity. They had varying temperaments, so they were miserable in various ways. They reacted to the situation differently, but all were marked by it. Their kind, practical Aunt Jessie helped them over some of the bumps, but the bumps were still there. The story of their sufferings is told in the first person by the warm-hearted sensitive sister Theodosia. This gives it all reality, making us feel the overwhelming misery that can sometimes engulf childhood.

The picture of the household is an excellent one. The three children are very well described and rouse our sympathetic interest. The emotional upheaval caused by divorce on any sensitive child is feelingly set down. More than that, the book is a picture of a period and a place. A great many accurate details of daily life set the mood and the moment. The milieu may have been a little stuffy, but it had its value. The author recognizes both stuffiness and value and puts each down with a certain humor.

A note on the jacket compares the Kendall household with another group, the Life-With-Father Days. Since the Day saga is essentially the chronicle of a happy marriage, the analogy is not completely accurate. What the Days would be like beset by divorce, it is hard to imagine, and it is divorce which makes the story of the Kendalls poignant. "We used to be a *nice* family" said the mother wistfully. However, though different in mood and mainspring, both "Life With Father" and "Aunt Jessie" give a picture of a household, its members and their relation to one another. Isabella Holt has written a true and moving story of a time, a place and a family.

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Book Burners in History

GEORGE W. LYON

WHO could even attempt to estimate the loss to culture, literature, and civilization in the past caused by the world's book-burners? In some instances whole libraries containing the priceless wealth of accumulated knowledge gathered and preserved for centuries have been ordered burned.

We might turn first to China, which very early in its history developed a high degree of culture. One of China's most famous monarchs was Tsin Chihwangti, who built the Great Wall of China (214 to 204 B.C.) which is said to be the one and only piece of man's engineering on the surface of our earth that could be seen through a telescope from the distance of the moon, no mean achievement as even Hitler or the Son of Heaven might admit. Great Builder as he was, Hwangti, by the same logic peculiar to all dictators, ancient or modern, conceived the notion that when men become too wise they become worthless.

In keeping with this philosophy, Hwangti in the year 313 B.C. attempted the extinction of all literature, root and branch, with the exception of those books dealing specifically with medicine, agriculture, and science. Not only were the books burned, but five hundred of the *literati* who had offended him most were executed and thousands of others banished.

But a better known example of book-burning, and indeed the classical one in all history, was the destruction of the great Alexandrian Library by the order of Omar in A.D. 642,* when he was head of the Moslem religion. Omar exercised his sword arm through the ruthless and intrepid Amru, who in true Mahometan manner advanced on conquered nations with the Koran in one hand and the sword in the other.

And almost four centuries before that, Aurelian visited destruction on the Bruchium quarter of the city. Later, 389 A.D., came the edict of Theodosius the Great for the destruction of the Serapeum. Theophilus, a fanatical Christian bishop, was his willing tool in this burning of pagan literature. It has always seemed a bit illogical to condemn a book as pagan literature just because it was written before the time of Christ, as obviously no other literature could have been written before the dawn of the Christian era.

Following his conquest of Palestine, Omar turned to Egypt. A long siege of seven months was required before Amru reduced the royal city of Alexandria. Here was the greatest library and museum of the then-known world. The books, or, more correctly, rolls of manuscripts, had been collected from every available source at great pain and expense. Omar did not burn the books in one great bonfire for spectacular effect, but, prompted by thrift, he used them as fuel to heat the luxurious baths for which the city was famous. The number of volumes has been given as 700,000, and we are told that this quantity was sufficient to heat the water for four thousand baths over a period of six months. One conservative scholar inclines to the belief that papyri and palm leaf manuscripts were very likely used for kindling the fires in these baths, and not as more substantial heat producing fuel, which seems quite probable. But in either case, kindling or fuel, the books were destroyed.

If Omar could have had any slight compunction for so wanton a destruction of the world's most valuable library, he at least dismissed the whole matter with easy logic: "The contents of these books are either in accordance with the teaching of the Koran or they are opposed to it. If in accord, then they are useless, since the Koran itself is sufficient, and if in opposition, they are pernicious and must be destroyed." No dictator of our day could advance a neater bit of sophistry to justify an act of vandalism, unless it be Hitler's idea of extending "protective custody" to Norway, Holland, Belgium, and the other conquered nations.

Fortunately, a few books escaped the flames at Alexandria, just how we do not know; but it is safe to assume that there were book lovers of that day who did not relish the idea of giving valuable and beautifully handwritten and embellished manuscripts to the flames, decree or no decree. We know that a few books were salvaged, and among these were the "Elements" of Euclid in thirteen books, the foundation of modern geometry; the "Almagest" of Ptolemy, or more correctly, the *Syntaxis-megiste.* This was first translated by the Arabians about 800 A.D. at the direction of Calif Al Maimon, and then called "Al-Maghesti," *i.e.:* "the megiste." It is regarded as one of the world's rarest and most valuable volumes.

Besides Ptolemy and Euclid many other great scholars advanced their theories and worked out their original ideas at Alexandria. Among these were Apollonius on the subject of conic sections, Archimedes, the great physicist, Eratosthenes, the scientific geographer, Hero and Philo in the field of dynamics, and Hipparchus in astronomy.

Among other book-burners must be included the mighty Julius Caesar during the siege of Alexandria. The priceless collection suffered great loss at his hands in the so-called Alexandrine War (48 to 47 B.C.). If his "Commentarii de Bello Gallico" were written at this time—as no doubt they were—many a schoolboy and schoolgirl has perhaps regretted that the "Commentaries" were not tossed into the fire, but Caesar was not an author to burn his own writings, any more than Hitler would be likely to destroy "Mein Kampf."

For our own times, of course, the May 10, 1933 book-burning by the Nazis is fully qualified for inclusion in this select circle of history's biggest literary fires. The light of that fire still glows in the following eye-witness account from *Time,* May 22, 1933:

> Unhampered by a chilly drizzle, some 40,000 Germans jammed the square between Berlin's Friedrich Wilhelm University and the Opera House looking at a black mass of criss-crossed logs, insulated from the pavement by sand. A thumping band blared out old military marches. Toward midnight a procession entered the square, headed by officers of the University's student dueling corps in their dress uniforms: blue tunics, white breeches, plush tam o' shanters and spurred patent leather jack boots. Behind them came senior students and a line of motor trucks piled high with books. More students clung to the trucks, waving flaring torches that they hurled through the air at the log pile. Blue flames of gasoline shot up, the pyre blazed. One squad of students formed a chain from the pyre to the trucks. Then came the books, passed from hand to hand while a leather lunged student roared out the name of the authors:
>
> 'Erich Maria Remarque (wild cheering)—for degrading the German language and the highest patriotic ideal.'
>
> 'Sigmund Freud—for falsifying our history and degrading its great figures.'

And so on . . .

*Some authorities have it 640.

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The First Parallel

WHAT DEMOCRACY MEANT TO THE GREEKS. By Walter R. Agard. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press. 1942. 278 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by C. A. ROBINSON, JR.

THIS volume comes from the facile pen of a well-trained classicist, who in 1927 joined Alexander Meiklejohn at the University of Wisconsin Experimental College, an experience, perhaps, that hastened his perception of the place of Greek civilization in the stream of world affairs. Professor Agard's book is for the lay reader, who, particularly in these days, would like to learn something of the lesson of ancient Greece.

Ancient Greece is the great example in human history of the combination of plain living and high thinking. Though of mixed origin and speech, and full of contradictions and paradoxes, her people bequeathed to posterity profound and sensible thought, noble poetry, beautiful art, and the ideal of free democracy. Perhaps it is well for us to be reminded of the fact that these great achievements of the mind and spirit were the work of a people who had none of our scientific instruments and few of our comforts. And it is instructive to recall that the Greeks asked most of the questions that interest man, and found some of the answers. I suppose that is why Elmer Davis, writing in *The Saturday Review* for October 14, 1939, classed Thucydides with "Mein Kampf" as required reading for today.

The Greeks went through almost every experience known to man; considerably more, for example, than Americans have yet had. For one thing, the ancient Greeks started from scratch. Or, rather, their barbaric ancestors destroyed a beautiful and brilliant civilization that had centered in Crete and Troy and Mycenae, so that they commenced their history in Greek lands amid the wreckage and turmoil of tribal conquest. Centuries of comparative isolation followed, simple days that produced the greatest poet in history nonetheless, and then, with the rise of trade and industry, came new horizons and revolution. Some states could not overthrow their hated aristocracies without resort to tyranny; but others—such as Athens, where lived a nimble-witted, radical, and inventive people—began the laborious process of hammering out systems of self-government.

Greek states were many and small. The advantages of a small state are great, because a considerable number of duties fall upon the individual, who thus receives an exceptional training in the art of civic life. This makes for versatility; it also made every Greek a politician. Intense local patriotism, responsibility, and love of liberty engendered a fearlessness which, in time of war, produced good fighters, and, in time of peace, a restless, inquisitive spirit willing to experiment. These people led a quiet agricultural life, with directness and naturalness substituted for our specialization and professionalism; and they led it in a country whose charm lies in its simplicity, in the peacock-blue sea (the wine-dark sea as Homer calls it), and in the mountains which change in color, with the brilliance of the sun, from russet to violet. The multitudinous city-states created, however, well-nigh constant warfare, not as constant as in our own day perhaps, certainly less deadly, and as a rule carried on by armies of farmers who refused to fight during the cold winter months. And thrice in their history—in the days of Persia, Macedon, and Rome—the Greeks were faced by the threat of foreign invasion, and on each occasion the propertied classes deserted democracy and preferred the arbitrary rule of an alien state as the best means of thwarting social revolution.

The beautiful manifestation of the human spirit known as Hellenism, or Greek civilization, developed in these small states. Some of their achievements are a delight to the mind and eye, they are timeless and must be constantly relived, so that through a study of them one is in a better position not only to understand and to correct his own civilization, but to get his bearings for the future as well. Professor Agard, writing in a pleasant and general way, turns a critical eye toward some of their achievements and failures; fortunately democracy to him means not only political institutions, but also art and literature and the opportunity for justice. It will benefit our own Republic if many of its citizens read and ponder this small volume.

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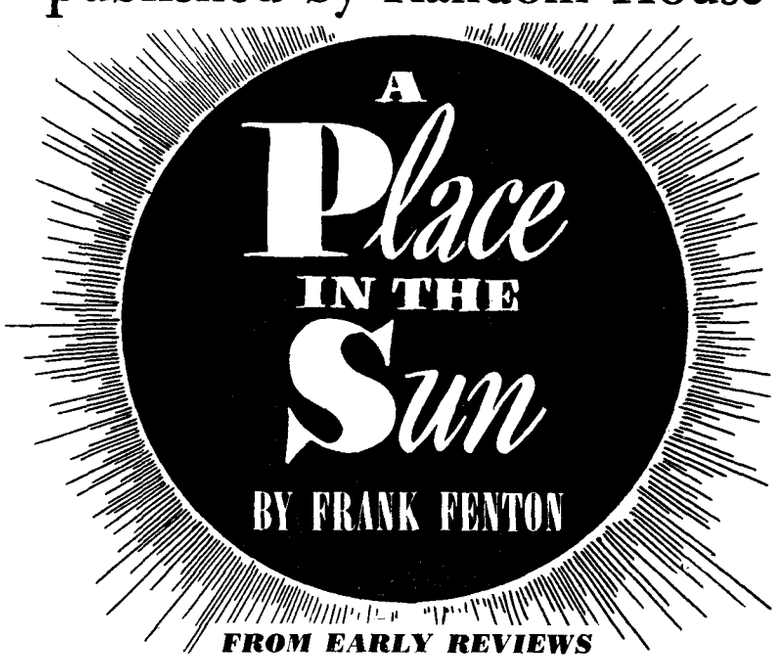

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Four Poets

THERE WILL BE BREAD AND LOVE. By Robert P. Tristram Coffin. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1942. 98 *pp.* $2.

PLAIN CHANT FOR AMERICA. By Katherine Garrison Chapin. New York: Harper & Bros. 1942. 141 *pp.* $2.

CHANGE OF SEASON. By Helen Magaret. New York: Farrar & Rinehart. 1941. 129 *pp.* $1.50.

PROUD RIDERS AND OTHER POEMS. By H. L. Davis. New York: Harper & Bros. 1942. 86 *pp.* $2.

Reviewed by SARA HENDERSON HAY

THE publisher's biographical circular about Mr. Robert P. Tristram Coffin tells us that "besides teaching poetry, Mr. Coffin keeps in training as a poet by living during the summer on his two farms." The phrase "keeps in training" strikes one as being peculiarly candid, because so many of the poems in Mr. Coffin's newest book, "There Will Be Bread and Love," are obvious exercises and muscle flexings. This is not to say that there are not many good poems in the collection. There always are, because Mr. Coffin at his best can turn a fine phrase and present a vivid and sparkling image, but his respect for himself as a poet betrays him into a sad state of unself-criticism. He discards as unimportant nothing that he thinks or sees, and his infatuation for certain words and themes gives any collection of his work a quality of repetitiousness. He is apparently not willing to prune his ideas and his observations with the same diligence he would apply to his apple trees. In consequence the honest fruit suffers.

I have always felt that a man should hesitate to proclaim himself a poet. That is an accolade which the world bestows. Mr. Coffin, however, feels no such reticence. The title poem of the book begins:

> I Tristram, since my life roots deep in pain
> Like ancient Tristram's, have the right again
> To say the final things, and say them plain,
> Being a poet . . .

This really sententious statement is indicative of the deadly earnestness with which Mr. Coffin takes himself. One can almost see him filling his lungs with good country air and going forth of a morning, his ears cocked and his eyes alert for the day's eternal verity. He discovers these over and over again, and puts them down in practised and easy verse. A poem such as the above mentioned "There Will Be Bread and Love" is an example of Mr. Coffin's regrettable facility. It is not enough simply to parade the stock properties of eternal verities. This is the easiest thing in the world for anyone with any poetic phraseology at his command to do. The comfortable statement that there will always be water, and hills to climb, and trees, and that we will never finish with honey and lambs and bees is not very convincing in a world where people have obviously got to do something about preserving their freedom and their way of life.

Katherine Garrison Chapin also assures us that what we love will not be lost, but she does it in an entirely different way. In the admirable essay which she has incorporated in her new volume, "Plain Chant for America," she states her poetic credo:

> Poetry is not an escape from life . . . The work of the poet is to find the secret of conveying this divine excitement he has received, to learn gradually how to capture it in rhythm and image, in words and impact; to find the undertones and overtones of mood and association which will convey its fresh surprise and poignancy, to let his imagination widen and enrich it, and his craftsmanship narrow it to the bare structure of essential words.

Happily, Miss Chapin's work lives up to the tenets of her faith. She is an extremely conscientious poet, with an intelligent and warm personal philosophy; and coupled with this sincerity of purpose is a perfected technique which makes everything she says well said.

She is sensitive and sympathetic and emotionally responsive. Perhaps the only thing that Miss Chapin has to guard against is an occasional tendency to conjure up the divine excitement. By this I mean that when one has the tools and the technical skill one is sometimes tempted to deliberately construct a poem out of those materials which one consciously decides are of poetic potentiality. Paradoxically enough, it is usually very difficult for the poet to realize when he has done this, because, after the fact, he has persuaded himself by the very fervor of the deed. Miss Chapin falls into this trap very seldom, but I did feel that poems such as "Greek Theatre," "The Great Rose," "Girl in the Sun," and even "Poem for This Time," however excellently done, had grown from a conscious feeling of poetic obligation. And the group of poems about New Mexico struck me as lacking that subtle fire of personal passion which makes other poems in the book warm and alive.

Robert P. Tristram Coffin

Miss Chapin is extremely versatile. This volume contains lyrics, ballads, poems of social consciousness, poems for choruses, translations, and an exceptionally beautiful medieval play "The Lady of the Inn," in which she has captured perfectly the classic simplicity and the delicate naivete of that form. Her ballads for a chorus, notably "And They Lynched Him on a Tree," are powerfully dramatic and effective both to read and to hear.

In short, Miss Chapin is a fine and sincere poet, with the emotional capacity and the technical equipment to carry her far along her chosen path.

"Change of Season," by Helen Magaret, is a collection of gentle, very feminine poems. Miss Magaret has a pleasant lyric touch; not a great deal of intensity. She is at her best in the simple, emotional lyrics, whose delicacy of style and imagery carry their slight weight well. Many of them, it is true, fall into categories—she finds God not in the houses built to honor Him, but in nature; she "has a love for lonely things," etc., etc. and these poems, however acceptable to the Woman's Page, had better have been left out of the volume. On the other hand, when she forgets the conventional poetic viewpoint and looks to her own heart, she speaks with real emotion and sympathy, and her ear is good.

She is an intuitive or instinctive poet, and I am sorry to say sometimes a little careless in imagery. For example:

> Men ever turn to lighter loves
> With slender breasts and unbound hair.

Well, "slender breasts" may have a pleasant syllable sound, but the adjective doesn't seem quite applicable. In another poem Miss Magaret describes

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an alley cat with "surfeited" eyes. It may be possible, but even the context of the poem doesn't make it convincing. And again she says:

With crossed arms like a nun would
I lie prone.

If Miss Magaret will look up the definition of the word "prone" I think she would find the above line as uncomfortable as the position would be.

The group of love sonnets in the book is the least satisfactory portion. Here Miss Magaret is completely mannered. If women must continue to write love sequences they should abandon a certain copyrighted style, and get along without the "think you's" "my lord's" "accuse me not's" and other medieval trappings.

In those lyrics, however, which wear the stamp of her own personality, there is a much more genuine and direct emotional force; a charm and a grace which reveal a warm and human sympathy, and a real poetic talent.

H. L. Davis's new book, "Proud Riders and Other Poems," is a distinguished collection. It is distinguished not only because of the authority of material and concept, because it presents a locale, the far west of the United States, in singularly fresh and vivid terms; but because it has a peculiarly intense quality of emphasis on a personal landscape. It is as if a man talked to himself about the things and the people he loved, seeing again with clear eyes those colors and forms and outlines which affected him, relating lovingly and without self-consciousness common sights raised to new poignancy and significance. I quote from the poem "The Rain Crow":

While women were still talking near
this dead friend
I came out into a field where ever-
green berry vines
Grew over an old fence, with rain on
their leaves;
And would not have thought of her
death, except for a few
Low sheltered berry leaves: I be-
lieved the rain
Could not reach them; but it rained
on them every one.
So when we thought this friend saf-
est and most kind,
Resetting young plants against win-
ter, it was she
Must come to be a dead body. And
to think
That she knew so much, and not that
she would die!

None of the poems in this book, despite Mr. Davis's accuracy of observation and selective detail, is purely pictorial. He describes the land he knows, the color and change of the seasons, but the personal implication is always there—a quality of introspection, an undertone of intensity which gives the book great emotional impact. Even the narrative poems, the stories of cattlemen and sheep herders and crop campers and rivermen, are never stories of these people only. The wider applications, the universal passions and sorrows and laughter of mankind are there. So Mr. Davis is not really a poet of any locale. He himself shows us a wider landscape.

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 437)

MILTON:

TRANSLATION OF PSALMS (LXXXI)

My God, oh make them as a wheel;
No quiet let them find,
Giddy and restless let them reel,
Like stubble from the wind.

Ashamed and troubl'd let them be,
Troubl'd and sham'd forever;
Ever confounded, and so die
With shame, and 'scape it never.

For Further Reading

THE SECOND WORLD. By R. P. Blackmur. Cummington, Mass.: The Cummington Press. 1942. 29 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by DUDLEY FITTS

PEOPLE who hold that good poetry, like a good steak, should make its total impression at one encounter will find scant nourishment in this book. Those who believe that good poetry is more serious than steak will discover, after repeated encounters, a rich and challenging verbal play. And those who maintain that verbal play is the essence of good poetry will find themselves brought back here, if they will weigh and distinguish and ponder, to at least an image of the original good steak.

The worst that can be said of poetry of this kind is that it has a tendency to let brilliant detail distort or even destroy the intention of the poem as a whole. This is evident in the longest piece in the book—a somewhat Eliotine monologue, an address to a jury, in the course of which the speaker reveals himself not only as scapegoat-defendant, but as plaintiff and judge as well. After many readings, I get only an unsatisfactory impression of what is bothering the deponent; but I am almost uncomfortably aware that he is a master of certain *tours de force* of language, and it is upon these, rather than upon his theme, that my attention is centered. "The stuff I harbor, *salvage* that I am"; "that gradually have lost *in tension*"; "this *browning* twilight air"; or, less strainedly and hence more effectively, "My innocence, like my guilt, is *radical*": these things coruscate, but they are insufficiently integrated with the poem—the flashes from the fuse somehow nullify the ultimate explosion. Yet the impression of "Before Sentence is Passed" is that of a man speaking passionately of important things; and one accordingly resents the intrusion of whatever qualification it was—esthetic, sentimental, or plain fear-of-being-plain—that embarrassed him when he began.

Some of the shorter poems are completely successful—"Missa Vocis," for instance, and the delicious "Rats, Lice, and History." Others are more open to debate. "Una Vita Nuova," "For Comfort and for Size," and "The Idea of Christian Society" are excellent in their way: but their way is Yeats; and it is strange to find Mr. Blackmur join-

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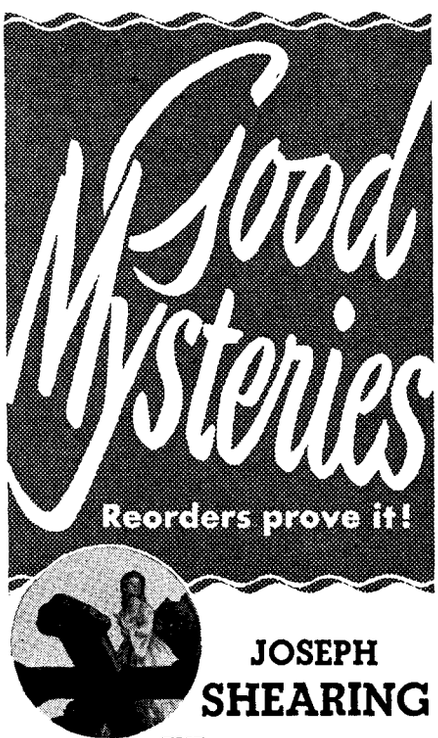
ing hands with all too current Mr. X and Mr. Y in rewriting the refrain-poems of the post-Crazy-Jane period.

That the most subtle critic of contemporary poetry should produce a book of highly subtle verse—that was to be expected. It is to be hoped, however, that he has not forgotten the manner of his first book of poems, "From Jordan's Delight," and that he will be able in future to bring about some compromise between the lyric delight of that work and the pyrotechnics of "The Second World"—a third world, where the Empsons cease from troubling and the Richards are at rest.



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The Phoenix Nest

WE have to thank the following for suggestions as to poems of the War: Pauline Leader for her mention of her verses called "Lullaby" which F. P. A. printed in the *New York Post,* and inclosing her "Warning to Fireflies" which appeared in *The Bennington Evening Banner;* an anonymous correspondent for saying "You omitted the best of the lot: 'The English War,' by Dorothy L. Sayers, published in the *London Times Lit. Supp.,* Sept 7, 1940; and John Mills of the Bell Telephone Laboratories reminding of a short and timely poem:

It is written by an American marine now "somewhere on the Pacific" and appears on a poster made by Kelly-Read and Company, Rochester, New York. In our very successful campaign in these Laboratories to sell war bonds through payroll deduction, we displayed in our hallways over a hundred of these posters—along, of course, with other designs. The words read as follows:

And if our lines should form and break,
Because of things you failed to make—
The extra tank or ship or plane
For which we waited all in vain,
And the supplies that never came
Will you then come and take the blame?
For we, not you, will pay the cost
Of battles you, not we, have lost.

Miss Harriet Gaylord of Bronxville quotes from memory a quatrain sent to her as a newspaper cutting. She thinks the author's last name was Green:

They looked at Death
And with him nonchalantly passed the time of day.
He paused, bewildered; said beneath his breath:
"Immortals, these!" and threw his scythe away.

The title was "Dunkirk." She also incloses the following by the famous author of "When We Were Very Young":

LONDON

(*From The London Times*)

(Si monumentum requiris, circumspice)

Old London's time-encrusted walls
Are but the work of human hands.

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	*Crime, Place, and Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
SHE NEVER GREW OLD *Garland Lord* (Crime Club: $2.)	Luxury loving young wife asphyxiated in old Conn. mansion after New Year's party. Sister and lawyer solve it.	Rather slow getting under way but pace quickens after murder occurs, and good amateur sleuthing leads to exciting finish.	Readable
EVEN BISHOPS DIE *Charles Saxby* (Dutton: $2.)	Bishop of Lesser Caribbees fatally plugged when lights go out at government house ball. Island police chief does acceptable deducing.	Straight-laced clergy, Col. Blimpish islanders, sultry ladies, native witchcraft, amorous intrigues, and violent deaths satisfactorily mixed.	Passable
MAIGRET AND M. LABBÉ *Georges Simenon* (Harcourt, Brace: $2.)	Maigret investigates the "Death of a Harbormaster" and another Simenon sleuth unravels mystery of "The Man from Everywhere."	First story exhibits Maigret in good form against foggy sea-port background; second is strange yarn of confidence man's belated "repentance."	Grade-B Simenon
THEY CAME TO KILL *Margaret Scherf* (Putnams: $2.)	Dope-crazed inebriate and his unfortunate companion slain on Montana ranch with several potential killers standing by. College prof. provides solution.	Man who badly needed killing and trio who were out to get him provide entertaining, fantastic, and well-tangled yarn.	Good
PHANTOM LADY *William Irish* (Lippincott: $2.)	Convicted wife-murderer saved at last minute by efforts of friend, sweetheart, and detective to locate mysteriously missing alibi.	Other murders and an amazing chase follows initial crime. Despite occasional improbabilities, yarn is highly original and ending packs real wallop.	Very good

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What man has fashioned for us falls;
What God has breathed into us stands.

What if the splendour of the past
Is shattered into dust, we raise
A monument that shall outlast
Even the Abbey's span of days.

On broken homes we set our feet
And raise proud heads that all may see,
Immortal in each little street,
The soul in its integrity.

—*A. A. Milne.*

Mrs. Leonard H. Wells of Minneapolis, Minnesota, would remind us "just for the sake of the record" of "A Man Arose," by Cecil Roberts. (Macmillan 1941), and "If Judgment Comes" by Alfred Noyes (Stokes 1941). "They may not be great poems, but they seem to me vital." Grosvenor B. Hill, of White Plains, N. Y., tells us he has a copy of Thomas S. Jones Jr.'s "Sonnets of the Cross" as originally printed by the Society of SS. Peter & Paul, London, 1924, his copy being autographed by the author. He says it contains thirty-three sonnets including "The Forest," "but not the sonnet quoted by you in *SRL*." Probably that was added later.

. . . The other night we began a sonnet in reminiscence of Cape Ann last year. The line was, "Next door I hear the loud roar of the surf." Then we got thinking about it, and decided that our colleague next door might misunderstand it. We didn't write it, Bennett!

. . . Recently the *SRL's* own Chris Morley delivered himself of a most excellent image in a postal-card to ye scribe. It was, "I've been slogging doggedly along and begin to see chinks of light toward the end of the covered bridge of my story." That's just what it feels like, to write a long book!

. . . Our Massachusetts correspondent sends us the following information: Birds one cannot shoot in the State of Massachusetts are: Auks, auklets, bitterns, fulmars, gannets (including Lewis), grebes, guillemots, jaegers (not the Bishop's), muirs (John is dead), petrels, puffins, sheerwaters, and terns. We ourself would never shoot a puffin under any circumstances! We feel luffin toward a puffin . . . and against it we have nuffin. . . .

The Wee MacGreegor

Who remembers now those delightful small books by J. J. Bell, recounting the adventures of the "Wee MacGreegor," which appeared in the first years of this century. The Scots in them was delightfully fresh and charming. They were as delicious humor in dialect as were, in the Irish dialect, Finley Peter Dunne's "Mr. Dooley" books. Who could forget Grandpaw Purdie, or Mrs. M'Ostrich, or the Wee One's perpetual hunger for "taiblet," or the rhyme Grandpaw Purdie recited to the supercilious Wee MacGreegor who called it just "anither auld yin":

Come a riddle, come a riddle, come a rote-tote-tote!
A wee, wee man in a rid, rid coat!
A staff in his haun, an' a stane in his throat—
Come a riddle, come a riddle, come a rote-tote-tote!

We leave the proper answer to our readers.

Frank Merriwell, et al

We were glad recently to hear from Charles Bragin, Export Manager of 1525 West 12th Street, Brooklyn, who apparently knows that we used to read of Frank and Dick Merriwell when young. He offers us a complete set of the 850 Merriwell books as originally published in *Tip Top*, from 1896 to 1913. The price for the set is $1,500.00. As this is a little higher than we care to go at present, we suggest that anyone interested to that extent might write to Mr. Bragin. He can also supply Nick Carter, Buffalo Bill, Liberty Boys of '76, Frank Reade, Old and Young King Brady, Fred Fearnot (Work and Win), Pluck & Luck, Diamond Dick, and the James Boys!

Two Melancholies

It was the poet Thomas Gray who added a sort of footnote to Burton's "Anatomy" with the following, in a letter written to Richard West. They called Gray the "melancholy Jaques" of English literature, but Leigh Hunt averred him to be "the best letter-writer in the language." Here he neatly distinguishes between two sorts of melancholy:

> Mine, you are to know, is a white melancholy, or rather leucocholy, for the most part; which, though it seldom laughs or dances, nor ever amounts to what one calls joy or pleasure, yet is a good easy sort of a state, and *ça ne laisse que de s'amuser*. The only fault of it is insipidity; which is apt now and then to give a sort of *ennui*, which makes one form certain little wishes that signify nothing. But there is another sort, black indeed, which I have now *and then* felt, that has somewhat in it like Tertullian's rule of faith, *"credo quia impossibile est,"* for it believes, nay, is sure of everything that is unlikely, so it be but frightful; and, on the other hand, excludes and shuts its eyes to the most possible hopes, and everything that is pleasurable. From this, the Lord deliver us; for none but he and sunshiny weather can do it.

WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT.

BUY WAR BONDS AND STAMPS

Essays by Pollock

GUIDE POSTS IN CHAOS. By Channing Pollock. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company. 1942. 271 + *xvii pp.* $2.

Reviewed by HENRY JAMES FORMAN

WHILE reading over the forty-odd brief essays of Channing Pollock, I was suddenly moved to take from the shelf a volume unopened for years. It was *The Spectator*. To my surprise I found that the note and tone of Mr. Pollock's book were not as dissimilar as one might think to the eighteenth-century comments and observations of Addison and Steele. Mr. Pollock would be the last to think his work another *Spectator*, nor do I mean to imply such a thing. But what is common to both is a vocal and articulate good sense.

In the floods of print pouring out of the presses nothing today is more eagerly read than the columnist and the commentator. It is as though even the mass of readers, never too selective, is in search of a gleam of positive intelligence to direct its thinking. And never in our history have we Americans needed more to do some straight thinking. Whether we agree

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BY BRAINARD CHENEY

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in all things with Mr. Pollock or not, we must admit that he thinks vigorously and quite fearlessly of the hundred and one things in the daily stream of our national current that affect the lives of all of us. And the fact that nearly all of these brief papers have appeared in popular magazines bears out the surmise that the mass of readers want them.

And what does Mr. Pollock write about? About marriage, about contentment, about common honesty, about waste and bragging, the vanity of riches and the happiness of small quiet homes, about immoral plays and indecent movies and, above all, about the blessings of our American democracy which many of us still appreciate too tepidly. He is infinitely grateful for the things most of us take for granted, like liberty, freedom to think, to speak, to live according to our individual preferences—things we may smile at in normal times, but precious enough to die for in times like the present.

"Why," he asks, "must appreciation brand one a Pollyanna? Why shouldn't it be an excellent idea, just now and then, to make mental note of a day's gifts—of every day's gifts—from waking in the morning to going to sleep at night?" A grateful mind, he reminds us in Thomas Secker's words, "is both a great and a happy mind."

Just so. And the fact that Mr. Pollock can write that now and be paid for it at popular magazine rates, shows that many others are making such mental notes and are grateful.

Send GOOD books to the soldiers and sailors through the Saturday Review Family, 25 W. 45th Street, New York, N. Y.

Design for Reading in Science

ENJOYMENT OF SCIENCE. By Jonathan Norton Leonard. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc. 1942. 319 pp., and index. $2.50.

Reviewed by GERALD WENDT

A LARGE part of our social ills is due not so much to the rapid advance of science as to the ignorance of the public concerning it. If we are ever to adjust our habits and institutions to the social power of science it is important that the citizens of our democracy attain a much better understanding of what science is. Therefore the encouragement of amateur interest in science is essential. It is rarely accomplished by scientists themselves because of their restricted professional interests, nor is it successfully done by the "popularizers" of science whose aim is entertainment rather than serious instruction. Mr. Jonathan Norton Leonard has a number of excellent popular books in science to his credit. His present book is not what its title implies but is a broad discussion of the fields covered by the varied sciences, their relation to each other and a detailed discussion of the books available for amateur reading and study. For this last purpose it is excellent, though by no means complete.

Mr. Leonard wisely divides the sciences into three groups—the abstract, the "thing" sciences, and the life sciences. The first group includes logic, mathematics, physics, and chemistry. In the usual college course these come first, since they are necessary to the true understanding of the others. Yet Mr. Leonard is right in listing them last, for the amateur is first interested in the description of reality and in the phenomena closest to him. The life sciences are therefore recommended for the beginner, to be followed by the second group which includes astronomy, geography, geology, minerology, oceanography, and meteorology. Mr. Leonard's own discussion of the sciences is competent and entertaining, full of the promise of enjoyment in further reading.

He undertakes a large responsibility, however, in selecting a book list for laymen. Probably no two persons could agree on such a list but some consensus of competent editors would be preferable to so personal a choice as this. Perhaps the chief defect is that very few books are mentioned that were published after 1940, although there has been a surprising spate of elementary texts intended for the non-scientific student in the past two years. It is also difficult to understand the omission of such books as "Storm," by George R. Stewart, "Mathematics and the Imagination," by Kasner and Newman, "Invitation to Experiment," by Ira M. Freeman. A serious omission is also the growing list of journals and magazines for the amateur, such as *The Scientific Monthly* and *Science News Letter*.

Any reviewer or editor could criticize Mr. Leonard's judgment and his critical standards but his book remains a very interesting and adequate guide to intelligent reading in science. It is the first such venture and points the need of such a survey, perhaps even one published annually. That is a project to be recommended to the National Association of Science Writers or to the American Association of Scientific Workers. Both of these organizations are primarily interested in the education of the public in science and either could compile an authoritative annual list based on the combined judgment of experts in this field of adult education.

THE LITERARY PULSE . . .

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Knopf Literary Fellowships

Alfred A. Knopf announces a new series of Literary Fellowships for 1943, with terms and conditions differing in several respects from those governing previous competitions. As an encouragement particularly to writers in the field of Americana, the award to winners will be increased from $1,200 to $2,500. Half of the amount will be an outright grant, the remainder an advance against royalties. At the same time the Fellowship in fiction is discontinued, and awards will be made only in the fields of history and biography.

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The Crostics Club

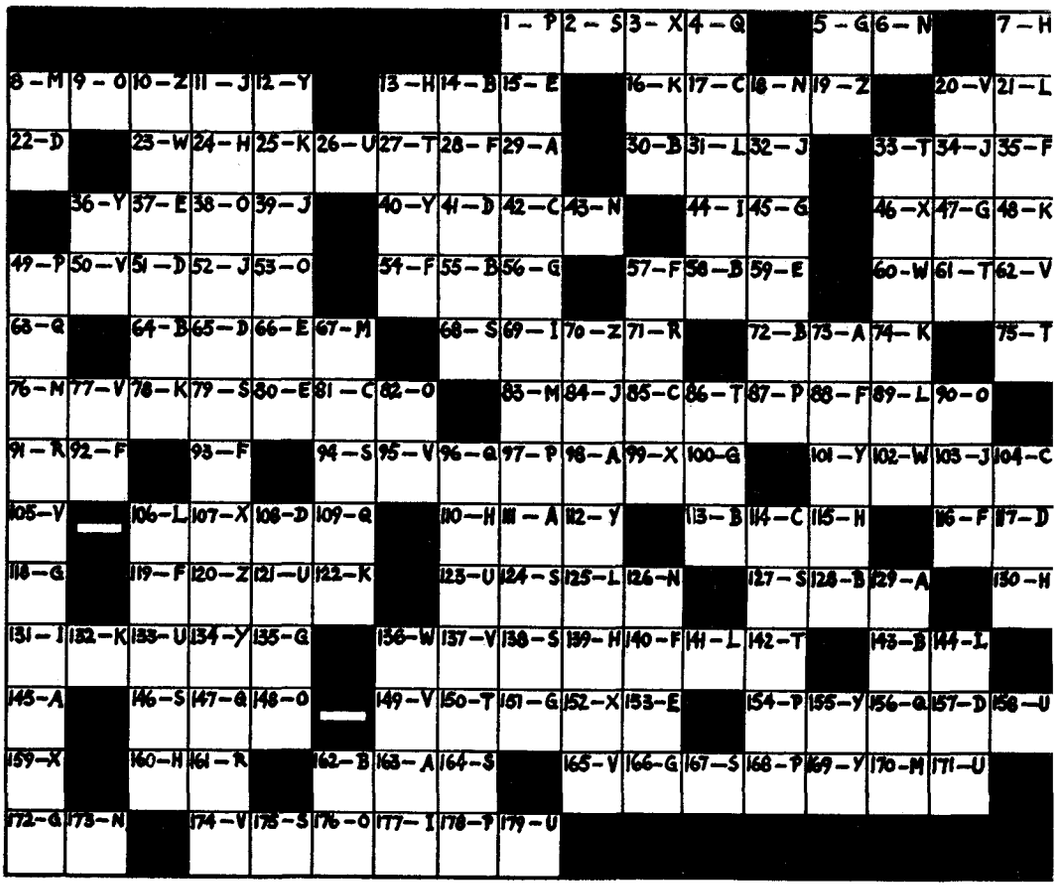
IT was pleasant to hear from Mrs. Rosina Emmet Sherwood in Stockbridge, Mass., mother of "Bob," as she dubs him. Strange to say, she could make neither head nor tail out of a DC from one of "Bob's" plays, though she found, even with meagre reference material, very difficult ones easy. Elmer Rice once wrote that similarly a DC from one of his plays had almost stumped him. . . . I wish that the dialogue of modern plays lent itself more readily to my needs. Even in Dryden and his contemporaries the most quotable part is the Prologue. Shakespeare with his blank verse is in comparison a mine of gold.

Theodore H. Jack, President of Randolph-Macon Woman's College, found No. 435 so easy that he asks if I am "letting you down." If you get a particularly easy DC occasionally, it's not intentional! It's no doubt due to the set-up of the letters, furnishing an excess of t's, n's, e's, and a dearth of the consonants needed for variety. A good quotation found after hours of research can't be thrown away, neither is there time to analyze its make-up before using it. A variety of consonants, however, must be used cautiously—one can't afford to use too many of them in one word.

I think you'll be interested in this curious coincidence: A prominent Californian wrote recently that, having come from the bedside of a sick friend who had fought a losing fight, to get into a mood for sleep she picked up the current *SRL* and did the DC. It was that "Let Me Go Down to Dust" of Lew Sarrett, and proved most solacing. Then she turned to the column with Lady Agnes Adams's comment on Stevenson's use of *tow-row*. Lady Adams was the friend who had just gone!

Mrs. Wilson Schoellkopf, Dallas, Texas, asks what sort of contrived DC game I mentioned in a previous column. Briefly—for you solitaire lovers may like to experiment: Select a short pithy quotation yielding a short Acrostic; like *Poe: The Gold Bug*. Give each player a copy. From the pool of Anagram letters each will lay out the quotation, break it up into constituent letters, and select the Acrostic. With the piles of letters in front of you and the Acrostic to give you the first letters of the words to be evolved, at a given signal go ahead. Call the game when one has finished. Concoct any scheme of scoring you choose. No two will evolve the same words and no one if she used the quotation again is likely to get the same group of words out of it. You might experiment a second time with that condition. Of course this is but the first stage of my work in concocting a DC, but the rest of it would not be feasible in a short game.

E. S. K.



Double-Crostics: No. 438

By ELIZABETH S. KINGSLEY

DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle you must guess twenty-six words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square on the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Reading up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; therefore words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary (1940 edition).

The solution of last week's *Double Crostic* will be found on page 15 of this issue.

WORDS

A. Referring to Chinese art of the reign 1662-1723 A. D.

B. Counterearth; inhabitant of the antipodes.

C. A pond (Scotland).

D. Ulysses' faithful swineherd.

E. Religious system and practices based on the Hindu sacred books.

F. Inhabitants of the earth on the same meridian, but on opposite sides of the equator.

G. Clumsy; sinister (comp.)

H. Imitative in color or form (zool.)

I. The root used in making *poi* (Hawaiian Islands).

J. An international organization for the succor of animals (2 wds.)

K. Totality.

L. One who cannot swim (Eton College, Eng.)

M. To puff up, as with pride.

N. English journalist and humorist (*Punch*; 1809-70).

O. To begin a quarrel or attack.

P. Walks with short steps, like a child.

Q. The daughter of *Cymbeline* (Shakespeare).

R. Uncle (Dutch) as applied to S. J. P. Kruger in the Boer War.

S. English newspaper publisher (1865-1922).

T. Phrasing.

U. Something feigned or imagined.

V. Novel by Scott.

W. Distinctive doctrines (usually disparaging).

X. One invested with vicarious authority.

Y. To confuse, make obscure, as with liquor.

Z. Mental discipline (Hinduism).

DEFINITIONS

98 145 111 29 163 129 73

30 14 162 128 64 72 113 58 143 55

42 17 104 114 85 81

51 117 157 65 108 41 22

37 59 15 80 153 66

93 28 57 140 116 119 88 54 92 35

47 135 45 172 5 166 118 56 151 100

110 7 13 139 115 160 24 130

177 131 69 44

39 11 32 52 84 34 103

48 16 78 25 122 74 132

31 125 144 141 21 89 106

83 76 67 170 8

43 6 126 173 18

9 82 90 148 38 176 53

168 97 49 87 1 178 154

147 156 96 4 109 63

161 91 71

167 2 124 138 127 94 79 175 146 68 164

33 61 150 75 27 86 142

123 158 26 121 171 179 133

165 77 50 137 174 20 62 95 149 105

102 136 60 23

107 99 46 152 3 159

101 36 40 155 12 112 134 169

10 70 19 120

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A VERY ARTICULATE GROUP of our testiest and who's-whoiest tycoons has been kicking up a rumpus in the public prints of late about the vast amount of extra bookkeeping and statistical hocus-pocus that have been imposed upon the business world by inquisitive government agencies. These indignant souls point out, and rightly, too, that they have had to engage untold numbers of extra clerks to compile dreary records and endless forms, most of which are probably dispatched forthwith to a Washington dungeon and never so much as looked at. Worse still, they say, they themselves have had to give more and more of their own precious time to official drives, investigations, and conferences.

The plaints of these gentlemen would be a great deal more poignant, it seems to me, if they weren't wasting ten times the energy and working hours that government demands exact from them by purely voluntary and questionable activities. Every day, another new movement to help the war, with a high-sounding aim and title, gets under way. It begins with a monster luncheon that keeps a lot of key people away from their desks for three hours. Here, the assemblage is treated to a pronouncement of some unassailable facts that everybody present knows as well or better than the speakers; a number of ponderous compliments are exchanged; and a cumbersome committee of ten to fifteen is appointed to move on to the second stage of the operation. This consists of a meeting several days later at a respectable club, where, with infallible discrimination, the windiest old bore in the group is chosen as chairman. Said chairman appoints subcommittees, enlarges on what he told the President when he visited Hyde Park in 1935, and arranges for the distribution of a few more multigraphed bulletins for harassed recipients to sweep into their baskets several days later. Gradually it seeps into the minds of even the committee members that despite their lofty aspirations, they are in the way of becoming simply one more pressure group that is trying to get its share and a little more out of the new government grab-bag, or failing that, a lot of middle-aged gentlemen who, deeply envious of younger partners in uniform, are trying to convince themselves that they too are making sacrifices to help win the war. After a few more desultory meetings and abortive attempts to formulate a genuine program, the committee gently passes into oblivion. By this time, likely as not, each of its members is on at least three brand new committees, and nobody even notes the demise of the old one.

I believe that no committee can function effectively with more than three members and that one man is even better than three. I believe that five out of six of all the countless and overlapping committees that are cluttering up the landscape today aren't worth a hoot in Hell. Their members could be rendering a more valuable service to the country by running their businesses properly.

Myself, I usually doze off at committee meetings, but today I am in on a pippin. The chairman is orating and I am practically writing this column under the table. I haven't had so much fun since the time Judge Jeremiah Mahoney caught me reading "The Grapes of Wrath" while serving as Juror Number Seven in the case of a Mullins *vs.* The Third Avenue Railway System. The Judge spotted me just as the Joads were pulling into Needles, and gave me such a dressing-down that I still tremble at mention of Steinbeck's name. . . .

FARRAR AND RINEHART announce a September publication date for Robert Bendiner's "Our State Department," which will explain, we hope, just why we are still doing business with Laval et Cie., and what frenzied lengths the Vichy contingent will have to traverse, before our State Department sends it packing. Do you remember the old story of the little fruit dealer whose partner first cheated him out of his entire share in the business, and then made off with his buxom young wife? The enraged victim shook his fist in the culprit's face and cried, "Some day, by golly, you gonna go too far!" . . . F. and R. are also publishing a book called "There Were Giants in the Land," in which twenty-eight writers of contemporary fame pay tribute to an equal number of the giants in our past. Henry Morgenthau has written an introduction for this one, and the list of contributors, which includes Wendell Willkie, Carl and Mark Van Doren, Stephen Benét, Henry Commager, Esther Forbes, Carl Sandburg, Henry Canby, Frederick Allen, John Marquand, and Alexander Woollcott, sounds like a publisher's dream of the Promised Land. . . .

MRS. ALFRED KNOPF is on the last leg of a two-month trip by air through all the countries of South America. We suspect that she is up to something more than checking up on the facts presented by John Gunther and Hudson Strode. . . . The first book to appear under the joint imprint of Doubleday, Doran and the *American Mercury* will be Prince Lowenstein's "On Borrowed Peace" . . . Pietro di Donato, author of "Christ in Concrete," has declared himself a conscientious objector and has been doing forestry work "and some writing" since July 16 at an objectors' camp in Cooperstown. . . . Eye-arresting description of a new American fighter plane quoted by *Time:* "she climbs like a homesick angel." . . . The story of Ruth Mitchell, who joined the famous Chetnick Legion in Jugoslavia, was imprisoned by the Nazis, and returned home on the Drottningholm, will be published by Oxford, who beat a dozen panting rivals to the draw by contacting Miss Mitchell via cable in Lisbon. In the good old days a publisher needed only a bicycle. Today he's got to have his eye on more places than the Associated Press. . . .

TOJO'S radio speeches sound like the Mussolini of earlier days. The man has Aleutians of grandeur. . . . When Joseph Hergesheimer spoke over the radio on a recent program sponsored by the Book and Magazine Guild, he was billed as the author of "Job Ahead." Investigation proved that the original copy read "Java Head." The typesetter—a loyal union man—insists that the error was unintentional.

THE EDITORS of the *SRL* are being more inscrutable than Mr. Cripps, but we gather from several straws in the wind that expansion plans are afoot, and that they ought to be in evidence this fall. The circulation has been growing in the past several months and so has the exchequer, and the subscribers are about to reap the benefits.

BENNETT CERF.

ANSWERS TO LITERARY QUIZ

1. A Green Parrot, in "Green Lover," by Jean de Belges.
2. Virgil, in "Divine Comedy," by Dante.
3. Don Juan, in "Don Juan," by Moliere.
4. Faust, in "Faust," by Goethe.
5. Olson & Johnson, in "Hellzapoppin."
6. Montaigne, in "Dialogues of the Dead," by Fontenelle.
7. Aristotle, in "Divine Comedy," by Dante.
8. Daniel Webster, in "The Devil and Daniel Webster," by Stephen Vincent Benét.
9. Don Giovanni, in "Don Giovanni," by Mozart.
10. Sin and Death, in "Paradise Lost," Book X, by Milton.

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